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United for Quality Care

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Cambar Edwards, CNA
Kimberly Hall North
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Cambar Edwards and I am a CNA at Kimberly Hall North in Windsor, CT. I have worked as a CNA at Kimberly Hall North since February 26, 1996, so 25 years now.

It used to be very pleasant feeling to come to work every day. Because it used to be, I felt like I was a part of a good team of workers, management included. We used to have 4 CNAs per unit, but over the years the ratios have become horrible. We now have 2 ½ CNAs per unit. During Covid sometimes it was one CNA per unit. CNAs are floating between units to fill in staffing holes.

We've gone through ten layoffs over the years. They started in 2007. Staffing has continued to get worse. The reduction of hours has caused the care to deteriorate. Workers are under immense stress and the staffing impacts the residents. They begin to feel that stress and strain as well. When they call for help it takes much longer than it should. Short staffing even impacts the kitchen, laundry and housekeeping departments. For example, you can't start making the beds when you get in for your shift if the linens aren't clean yet.

I typically work 40 hours a week. I always feel exhausted, burnt out, frustrated at the end of a shift. I work on the lock down unit, and those residents don't sleep. At night there is 1-2 CNA working this unit to care for 30 people. With the additional residents from other units it is closer to 40. These ratios are ridiculous. We can't deliver the care we want to.

Increasing wages would be significantly appreciated. I would feel like someone actually cared about me and my coworkers. I would be able to pay my bills on time. We're constantly robbing Peter to pay Paul to make ends meet. Many of my co-workers work two jobs and we live paycheck to paycheck. With a raise we could potentially save money. Please help workers like me and allocate more funding to Nursing Homes. Thank you for your time.